

WASHINGTON—Congress has passed a bill that addresses critical public safety needs of Indian reservations and provides additional law enforcement and criminal justice resources for them, announced U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz. In addition, the legislation included a bill sponsored by Pastor that gives more teeth to laws that protect consumers and Native American entrepreneurs from sales of unauthentic jewelry and artifacts. The bill expands investigative powers of such sales to all federal agencies, whereas currently, only the Federal Bureau of Investigation may investigate these sales.

The **Tribal Law and Order Act** and the **Indian Arts and Crafts Amendment of 2010** passed Wednesday in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Senate version of the legislation, sponsored by Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jon Kyl, also has been passed and now will go to the President for his signature to become law.

Pastor said the tribal law legislation addresses the serious violence and crime issues facing the tribes and he was glad it received bipartisan support.

Despite the federal government's charge to protect Indian communities, the violent crime rate on reservations is two-and-a-half times the national average. For example, Amnesty International estimates that one in three Native American women will be raped in their lifetimes. This legislation will address these issues by establishing accountability measures for federal agencies responsible for investigating and prosecuting reservation crime, and by providing tribes with additional tools to combat crime locally.

In addition, the bill protects the authenticity of Native American artifacts.

"By allowing all federal agencies to investigate the sale of any good that is misrepresented as an Indian-produced product, we provide additional resources to devote to crimes involving Native American arts," Pastor said. "Native American entrepreneurs and consumers who purchase Native American made jewelry, pottery and other products welcome this legislation as it ensures that the products being sold and purchased are genuine Native American objects."

